IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace paragraph number **[0009]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0009] Also, the sleeve element of the present invention may be configured to be mechanically constrained about the outer periphery ~~of~~ of the piston element to provide fluid sealing between the piston element and a bore surface. Specifically, the sleeve element may be disposed between retention flanges formed on the exterior surface of the piston element that have a lateral extent that exceeds the lateral extent of the inner surface of the sleeve element. Further, the inner surface of the sleeve element may be sized to interferingly engage the outer periphery of the piston element about which it is disposed.

Please replace paragraph number **[0010]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0010] Also, a resilient energizer or energizers carried by the piston element may be used to seal against a portion of the inner surface of a sleeve element of the present invention by way of contact therewith. A resilient energizer or energizers carried by the piston element may also support, bias, or both support and bias the sealing feature of a sleeve element of the present invention. Because a resilient energizer may provide relatively effective sealing as well as support, in accordance with another aspect of the invention, a preferentially acting pressure relief structure may allow for pressure between the inner surface of the sleeve element and the outer surface of the piston to be relieved, which may prevent damage to the sleeve element. Such a pressure relief structure may include protrusions or grooves formed on the surface of an energizer.

Please replace paragraph number **[0013]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0013] As described above, at least a portion of an end region ~~of the~~ of the sleeve element may be configured to be biased laterally into an adjacent first recess formed in the periphery of the piston element in response to contact between the outer surface of the substantially annular body and the bore surface. Alternatively, both end regions of the sleeve

element may be configured to be biased laterally into corresponding recesses formed within the piston element.

Please replace paragraph number **[0022]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0022] FIG. 1C ~~shows~~ shows an enlarged partial cross-sectional view of a portion of a sleeve element disposed about a piston element as shown in FIG. 1B;

Please replace paragraph number **[0024]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0024] FIG. 1E ~~shows~~ shows an enlarged partial cross-sectional view of a portion of the seal assembly as shown in FIG. 1D;

Please replace paragraph number **[0032]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0032] FIG. 1N shows a perspective view of ~~a~~ the pressure equalizing structure of FIG. 1M;

Please replace paragraph number **[0044]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0044] FIG. 1A shows a cross-sectional view of an exemplary piston element 20 ~~embodiment~~ of the present invention, generally comprising an annular body disposed symmetrically about longitudinal axis 12. As shown in FIG. 1A, piston element 20 includes rounded upper end 36 and rounded lower end 38. Further, piston element 20 includes recesses 26 and 28 formed therein, as well as retention flanges 42, 43, 44, and 45, as shown in FIG. 1A. Retention flanges 42, 43, 44, and 45 may extend laterally in excess of the lateral extent of outer surface 27 of the piston element 20. As stated above, laterally, as used herein, generally means a direction in relation to a central axis, however, when applied to a cylindrical body or surface, laterally corresponds to a radial direction. Of course, the present invention contemplates that a piston element may comprise other body geometries, such as generally elliptical, generally square, or as otherwise known in the art.

Please replace paragraph number **[0046]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0046] FIG. 1B shows a cross-sectional view of an exemplary seal assembly 10 ~~embodiment~~ of the present invention wherein sleeve elements 22 and 24 are positioned about piston element 20. Generally, seal assembly 10 may be disposed within a bore surface 50 (FIGS. 1D and 1E) to operate as a movable assembly therein. Further, sleeve elements 22 and 24 may each also include bearing surface 40, sealing feature 32, and depression 46. Thus, sleeve elements 22 and 24 may each provide a bearing surface and a sealing surface during operation of the seal assembly 10 as a movable assembly. Such a configuration may provide a robust, effective, and easily implementable sealing and bearing mechanism for mechanical components that move with respect to one another.

Please replace paragraph number **[0047]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0047] Sleeve elements 22 and 24 may be generally annular and each may be disposed and oriented about outer surfaces 27 of piston element 20 as shown in FIG. 1B. In addition, sleeve elements 22 and 24 may have a substantially constant radial or lateral thickness, illustrated in FIG. 1B as ~~t~~ "t." Sleeve element 22 may include upper end region 21 disposed laterally adjacent to recess 26. Likewise, sleeve element 24 may include lower end region 23 disposed laterally adjacent to recess 28. Sleeve elements 22 and 24 may be substantially identical in their dimensions and configuration, but may simply be disposed about piston element 20 in opposite orientations, as shown in FIGS. 1B, 1D, and 1F. For simplicity, sleeve elements 22 and 24 will be described as being configured with a number of substantially identical features; however, the present invention recognizes and contemplates that each of sleeve elements 22 and 24 may be sized and configured according to design choice and application specific conditions.

Please replace paragraph number **[0052]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0052] Additionally, FIG. 1C shows an enlarged partial cross-sectional view of sleeve element 22 disposed about piston element 20, as shown in FIG. 1B, and depicts several aspects of sleeve element 22. For instance, sleeve element 22 may be mechanically constrained on piston

element 20 because flange 43 thereof laterally overlaps sleeve element 22 as shown by distance d1. The magnitude of distance d1 may be affected by the relative amount of interference between the inner surface 31 of sleeve element 22 and the outer surface 27 of piston element 20. Explaining further, because the inner ~~surface~~ surface 31 of sleeve element 22 is smaller than the outer surface 27 of piston element 20, sleeve element 22 may slightly deflect into the laterally adjacent recess 26 without application of any external forces. However, such deflection may depend, without limitation, on the elasticity of sleeve element 22, the size and configuration of sleeve element 22, the relative temperatures of sleeve element 22 and piston element 20, the size and configuration of the laterally adjacent recess 26, and the amount of interference between the inner surface 31 of sleeve element 22 and outer surface 27 of piston element 20. Of course, the same aspects described above may be included by sleeve element 24.

Please replace paragraph number **[0057]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0057] FIG. 1D shows an apparatus 11 comprising seal assembly 10 disposed within bore surface 50 and FIG. 1E shows an enlarged partial cross-sectional view of a portion of sleeve element 22, as shown in FIG. 1D. Bore surface 50 may preferably be smaller than the lateral extent of sleeve elements 22 and 24, wherein the outermost lateral extent of each of sleeve elements 22 and 24 is defined by sealing features 32, as discussed above. Thus, installation of bore surface 50 about piston element 20 having sleeve element 22 disposed thereon, via contact between bore surface 50 and sealing feature 32, may cause the upper end region 21 of sleeve element 22 to be biased laterally inwardly into recess 26. Similarly, installation of bore surface 50 about piston element 20 having sleeve element 24 disposed ~~24~~ thereon, via contact between bore surface 50 and sealing feature 32, may cause the lower end region 23 of sleeve element 24 to be biased laterally inwardly into recess 28. Such a configuration may provide improved mechanical locking of sleeve elements 22 and 24, as described below.

Please replace paragraph number **[0058]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0058] Such bias is illustrated by FIG. 1E, where the upper end region 21 of sleeve element 22 is shown as biased into recess 26 of piston element 20, which causes upper end region 21 to overlap with retention flange 43, as shown by distance d2. Bias of upper end region 21 of sleeve element 22 and lower end region 23 of sleeve element 24 may be caused by bore surface 50 being laterally smaller than the lateral extent of sealing feature 32. Further, such relative sizing may cause sealing feature 32 of sleeve element 22 to sealingly engage bore surface 50. As such, the apparatus 11 shown in FIG. 1D may be suited for use as a component of a double acting cylinder.

Please replace paragraph number **[0061]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0061] However, apparatus 51 also includes energizer 60 disposed generally within recess 66 as well as energizer 62 disposed generally within recess 68. Energizers ~~66~~ 60 and ~~68~~ 62 may be formed as an annular member, such as an O-ring. Therefore, recess 66 and 68 may be sized and configured to position energizers 60 and 62 against sleeve elements 22 and 24 and also retain energizers 60 and 62 during use. Energizers 60 and 62 may be formed of any of various materials including thermoset or thermoplastic. For example, preferably, thermoset or thermoplastic elastomers may be used, such as, for instance, polyurethane, nitrile rubber (NBR), neoprene, Viton®, silicone, or other suitable resilient materials may be used to form energizer 60, energizer 62, or both.

Please replace paragraph number **[0063]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0063] FIG. 1G shows an enlarged partial cross-sectional view of the seal assembly 49 shown in FIG. 1F, prior to the bore surface ~~51~~ 50 being disposed thereabout. As shown in FIG. 1G, energizer 60 may be disposed generally within recess 66 formed within piston element 20. As described above, sleeve element 22 may include sealing feature 32, depression 46, and bearing surface 40. Further, sealing feature 32 may exhibit a lateral extent that exceeds the lateral extent of the bearing surface 40, as illustrated by reference line 41. In

other words, the lateral thickness of sleeve element 22 may increase in the upper end region 21 of sleeve element 22 to form sealing feature 32. Upon positioning of sleeve element 22 about piston element 20, sleeve element 22 may contact energizer 60. Alternatively, energizer 60 may not initially contact sleeve element 22. Also, sleeve element 22 may be mechanically constrained on piston element 20 because flange 43 of piston element 20 laterally overlaps sleeve element 22 as shown by δ.

Please replace paragraph number **[0064]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0064] FIG. 1H shows an enlarged partial cross-sectional view of the apparatus shown in FIG. 1F. As shown in FIG. 1H, upon positioning of bore surface 50 about sleeve element 22, contact between bore surface 50 and sealing feature 32 may cause the upper end region 21 of sleeve element 22 to compress energizer 60. In addition, sealing feature 32 may sealingly engage bore surface 50, biasing the upper end region 21 of sleeve element 22 laterally inwardly within recess 66 as shown in FIG. 1G. Of course, the amount of lateral overlap between the upper end region 21 of sleeve element 22, denoted by $\delta 1$, may increase according to the bias of upper end region 21 laterally into recess 66. Of course, energizer 60 may resiliently support biasing of upper end region 21 of sleeve element 22 into recess 66. As may also be seen in reference to FIG. 1H, biasing upper end region 21 of sleeve element 22 into recess 66 may also preferentially retain or position energizer 60 against the lower end of recess 66. More specifically, the upper end region 21 of sleeve element 22 may be configured to preferentially position energizer 60 generally within the lower axial region of recess 66. Such a configuration may provide a relatively robust sealing arrangement and may resiliently support the upper end region 21 of sleeve element 22 within recess 66.

Please replace paragraph number **[0068]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0068] Further, as disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 6,595,524 to Zitting, assigned to the assignee of the present invention, and incorporated in its entirety by reference, a portion of an energizer may be configured to allow preferential flow therearound. As shown in FIGS. 1K-1M,

energizers 80 and 86 may include stand-off protrusions, grooves, or both that may selectively allow fluid or gas to flow or pass therearound. Specifically, as shown in FIGS. 1K and 1L, energizer 80 may include circumferentially spaced axial protrusions 84 as well as circumferentially spaced lateral protrusions 82. Thus, when energizer 80 is positioned generally within recess 66 as shown in FIG. 1K, energizer 80 may seal against a fluid or gas passing thereby. However if the pressure between inner surface 31 of sleeve element 22 and piston element 20 increases over the pressure axially above energizer 80, energizer 80 may be moved longitudinally upwardly. Thus, once energizer 80 no longer contacts the lower axial surface of recess 66, fluid or gas may pass therearound, by way of the flow path between the wall of the recess and the surface of energizer 80, portions of which are spaced away from the wall of the recess 66 by way of axial protrusions 84 and lateral protrusions 82. Similarly, as shown in FIGS. 1M and 1N, energizer 86 may seal against the lower axial surface of recess 66 if pressure acting on the upper surface of energizer 86 exceeds the pressure acting on the lower surface thereof. However, if pressure acting on the lower surface of energizer 86 exceeds the pressure acting on the upper surface thereof, ~~energize~~ energizer 86 may be moved within recess 66, allowing the fluid or gas at a higher pressure to move by the energizer 86, via axial channels 88 and lateral channels 90, to equalize the pressure across energizer 86.

Please replace paragraph number **[0070]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0070] In addition, the present invention contemplates another mechanism for inhibiting damage to either of sleeve elements 22 and 24 due to an increased pressure acting on the inner surfaces 31 thereof in relation to the pressure acting on the bearing surfaces 40 thereof, respectively. Particularly, as shown in FIG. 1P, the pressure acting on the inner surface(s) 31 of sleeve elements 22 and 24 may be substantially equalized in relation to the pressure acting on the bearing surface(s) 40 thereof, respectively. Aperture(s) 92 may extend between the inner surface 31 of either sleeve elements 22 or 24 to the bearing surface 40 thereof, respectively, so that pressure may communicate therebetween. In such a configuration, pressure differences may be inhibited, since the pressure acting on the inner surface 31 of the sleeve element 22 and the

pressure acting on the bearing surface 40 thereof may substantially equalize. Although aperture(s) 92 are shown as positioned in the upper end region 21 of sleeve element 22, apertures may be disposed along sleeve element 22 without limitation, and may take any number of geometries, such as round holes, axial slots, circumferential slots, or may be otherwise configured to allow pressurized fluid or gas to communicate between inner surface 31 of sleeve elements 22 or 24 with its corresponding bearing surface 40 thereof.

Please replace paragraph number **[0071]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0071] Referring now to FIG. 2A, a side cross-sectional view of another exemplary embodiment of a seal assembly 110 of the present invention is shown. Seal assembly 110 includes piston element 120 comprising a generally annular body disposed about axis 112 and including recesses 114 and 116. Sleeve element 122 is shown as positioned about piston element 120, and may be sized so that the diameter of inner surface 131 thereof is smaller than the diameter of outer surface 127 of piston element 120 prior to installation thereon. Therefore, piston element 120 includes upper end region 136 and lower end region 138, which are shown as being rounded, although upper end region 136 and lower end region 138 may be tapered, rounded or otherwise configured to facilitate positioning of sleeve element 122 about piston element 120. Alternatively, a device or apparatus, such as an installation cone, as known in the art, may be used to elongate sleeve element 122 so that it may be positioned about piston element 120 without configuring the ends of the piston element 120 to facilitate positioning of sleeve element 122 thereon.

Please replace paragraph number **[0072]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0072] Thus, the inner surface 131 of sleeve element 122 may preferably elongate to accommodate the interference between the outer surface 127 of the piston element 120 as well as disposal about retention flanges, which, as discussed below, may also be sized larger than the diameter of inner surface 131 of sleeve element 122. Therefore, sleeve element 122 may be formed from a material that accommodates expansion or elongation without incurring substantial

damage thereto. For~~example~~ example, sleeve element 122 may be formed from a material that exhibits about 2% or more elongation including polyamide, polytetrafluoroethelene (PTFE), acetal, polyethelene, polyurethane, or other materials. However, it should also be understood that sleeve element 122 may not be configured to expand or elongate, without limitation.

Please replace paragraph number **[0075]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0075] Generally, the behavior of upper end region 121 and lower end region 123 as disposed laterally adjacent to~~recess~~ recesses 126 and 128, respectively, may be analogous to the behavior as described above in relation to upper end region 21 of sleeve element 22 and lower end region 23 of sleeve element 24. Accordingly, as shown in FIG. 2B, sealing features 132 of sleeve element 122 may sealingly engage bore surface 50 disposed therearound, and upper end region 121 as well as lower end region 123 may be biased into laterally adjacent recesses 126 and 128, respectively. In addition, sleeve element 122 includes bearing surface 140 for conformally engaging bore surface 50. Such a configuration may provide relatively efficient and effective sealing and bearing structure for use in machine components that move relative to one another.

Please replace paragraph number **[0077]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0077] Turning to FIG. 3A, which depicts another exemplary embodiment of a seal assembly 210~~the~~ of the present invention, it may be desirable to position an energizer 260 generally within recess 261 formed in piston element 220. Such a configuration may provide resilient support and bias to the sleeve element 122 in relation to a bore surface 50. Therefore, energizer 260 may be formed of a material that exhibits reversible deformation or resiliency. Such materials may include, for~~instance~~ instance, thermosets or thermoplastics. More particularly, thermoset or thermoplastic elastomers may be used, such as, for example, polyurethane, nitrile rubber (NBR), neoprene, Viton®, silicone, or other suitable resilient materials may be used to form energizer 260.

Please replace paragraph number **[0078]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0078] Analogous to the description of seal assembly 110, seal assembly 210 includes piston element 220 comprising a generally annular body disposed about axis 212 and may include recesses 214 and 216 formed therein. Also, piston element 220 may include ~~and having~~ upper end region 236 and lower end region 238, which are shown as being rounded to facilitate positioning of sleeve element 122 about piston element 220. In addition, sleeve element 122 may be positioned about piston element 220, and may be sized so that the diameter of inner surface 131 thereof is smaller than the diameter of outer surface 227 of piston element 220. Further, as shown in FIG. 3A, sleeve element 122 may be disposed about piston element 220 between retention flanges ~~243~~ 143 and ~~245~~ 145, the lateral extent of which may exceed the lateral position of inner surface 131 of sleeve element 122, to mechanically constrain sleeve element 122 therebetween. Sleeve element 122 may include sealing features 132, configured to sealingly engage a bore surface 50 (shown in FIG. 3B), depressions 146, as described hereinabove, as well as bearing surface 140, configured to conformally engage bore surface 50 (shown in FIG. 2B). Sleeve element 122 may also include an upper end region 121 positioned laterally adjacent to recess ~~226~~ 126 and a lower end region 123 positioned laterally adjacent to recess 228.

Please replace paragraph number **[0080]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0080] Moving to FIGS. 4A and 4B, FIG. 4A shows a cross-sectional view of yet another exemplary embodiment of a seal assembly 310 ~~the~~ of the present invention that includes energizers 360 and 362 disposed within corresponding recesses 326 and 328. FIG. 4B shows a cross-sectional view of an apparatus 311 including the seal assembly 310 as shown in FIG. 4A disposed within bore surface 50. As discussed in relation to FIGS. 1F, 1G, and 1H, regarding sleeve element 22, analogously, such a configuration may provide resilient support and bias to the sleeve element 122 in relation to a bore surface 50. Thus, energizers 360 and 362 may be formed of a resilient, extensible, or reversibly deformable material as discussed above.

Please replace paragraph number **[0081]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0081] Seal assembly 310 includes piston element 320 comprising a generally annular body disposed about axis 312 and ~~having~~ may include recesses 314 and 316 formed therein. Piston element 320 may also comprise upper end region 336 and lower end region 338, which may be rounded or tapered to facilitate positioning of sleeve element 122 about piston element 320. According to the present invention, sleeve element 122 may be sized so that the diameter of inner surface 131 thereof is smaller than the diameter of outer surface 327 of piston element ~~220~~ 320. Also, as shown in FIG. 4A, sleeve element 122 may be disposed about piston element ~~220~~ 320 between retention flanges 343 and 345. The lateral extent of retention flanges 343 and 345 may exceed the lateral position of inner surface 131 of sleeve element 122, so that positioning sleeve element 122 therebetween mechanically constrains sleeve element 122 onto the piston element ~~120~~ 320.

Please replace paragraph number **[0085]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0085] As may be appreciated, there are many variations and combinations of components that may include the sleeve element of the present invention. Specifically, it is contemplated by the present invention that a sleeve element according to the present invention may be positioned within a bore surface, such as within an annular groove, and may be configured to seal against a piston element surface, wherein the piston element may comprise a cylindrical body such as a rod. FIG. 5A illustrates a sleeve element 422 of the present invention wherein the sealing features 432 are oriented laterally inwardly. In addition, sleeve element 422 includes a bearing surface 440 that is also oriented laterally inwardly.

Please replace paragraph number **[0086]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0086] FIG. 5B shows a cross-sectional view of an apparatus 411 including the ~~seal~~ sleeve element 422 as shown in FIG. 5A disposed within bore surface 450. Of course, apparatus 411 may include at least one energizer (not shown), which may provide resilient

support, bias, or both to a portion of the sleeve element 422. Sealing features 432 and depressions 446 are not labeled in FIG. 5B, for clarity.

Please replace paragraph number **[0087]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0087] Sleeve element 422 may be sized so that the diameter of outer surface 431 thereof is larger than the diameter of bore surface 450. Such a configuration may provide interference between the sleeve element 422 upon disposal within bore surface 450. Thus, sleeve element ~~122~~ 422 may comprise a material that exhibits about 2% or more resilient compression or elongation. However, it should also be understood that sleeve element 422 may not be configured to compress or deform, without limitation. Also, as shown in FIG. 5B, sleeve element 422 may be disposed within bore surface 450 between retention flanges 443 and 445. The lateral extent of retention flanges 443 and 445 may be less than the lateral position of outer surface 431 of sleeve element 422, so that positioning sleeve element 422 therebetween mechanically constrains sleeve element 422 onto the bore surface 450.

Please replace paragraph number **[0088]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0088] In addition, sleeve element 422 may include sealing features 432, configured to sealingly engage outer ~~piston element~~ surface 427 of piston element 420, depressions 446, as well as bearing surface 440, which may be configured to conformally engage outer ~~piston element~~ surface 427 of piston element 420. Sleeve element 422 may also include an upper end region 421 positioned laterally adjacent to recess 426 and a lower end region 423 positioned laterally adjacent to recess 428.

Please replace paragraph number **[0089]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0089] Bending of the upper end region 421 and lower end region 423 may be comparable to the behavior as described above in relation to upper end region 21 of sleeve element 22 and lower end region 23 of sleeve element 24. Accordingly, as shown in FIG. 5B, sealing features 432 of sleeve element 422 may sealingly engage outer ~~piston element~~

surface 427 of piston element 420 disposed thereagainst, and upper end region ~~421~~ 421, as well as lower end region ~~423~~ 423, may be respectively biased into corresponding laterally adjacent recesses 426 and 428. Accordingly, the upper end region 421 and lower end region 423 of sleeve element 422 may laterally overlap corresponding retention flanges 443 and 445.

Please replace paragraph number **[0091]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0091] In another embodiment of the present invention, a sleeve element having a sealing feature may be employed to seal against a piston element. Particularly, FIG. 6A illustrates a side cross-sectional view of assembly 510 including sleeve element 522 of the present invention wherein the sleeve element 522 includes a sealing feature 532 disposed generally proximate to lower end region 523 and is oriented laterally inwardly. In addition, sleeve element 522 includes a bearing surface 540 and a depression 546 that is also oriented laterally inwardly. FIG. 6A also shows ~~seal~~ sleeve element 522 disposed within bore surface 550. Of course, assembly 510 may include at least one energizer (not shown), which may provide resilient support, bias, or both to a portion of the sleeve element 522.

Please replace paragraph number **[0092]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0092] Sleeve element 522 may be sized so that the diameter of outer surface 531 thereof is larger than the diameter of bore surface 550. Such a configuration may provide interference between the sleeve element 522 upon disposal within bore surface 550. Thus, sleeve element 522 may comprise a material that exhibits about 2% or more resilient compression or deformation. However, it should also be understood that the outer surface 531 ~~sleeve~~ of sleeve element 522 may be sized to not interfere with the bore surface 550. Therefore, sleeve element 522 may not be configured ~~compress~~ to compress or deform, without limitation. As shown in FIG. 6A, sleeve element 522 may be disposed within bore surface 550 between retention flanges 543 and 545. The lateral extent of retention flanges 543 and 545 may be less than the lateral position of outer surface 531 of sleeve element 522, so that positioning sleeve element 522 therebetween mechanically constrains sleeve element 522 onto the bore surface 550.

Accordingly, the upper end region 521 and lower end region 523 of sleeve element 522 may laterally overlap corresponding retention flanges 543 and 545.

Please replace paragraph number **[0093]** with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0093] As shown in FIG. 6B, which shows apparatus 511, sleeve element 522 may include sealing feature 532, configured to sealingly engage outer ~~piston element~~ surface 527 <u>of piston element 520</u>, depression 546, as well as bearing surface 540, which may be configured to conformally engage outer ~~piston element~~ surface 527 <u>of piston element 520</u>. Bending of the lower end region 523 may be comparable to the behavior as described above in relation to lower end region 23 of sleeve element 24. Accordingly, as shown in FIG. 6B, sealing features 532 of sleeve element 522 may sealingly engage outer ~~piston element~~ surface 527 disposed thereagainst, and lower end region 523 may be respectively biased into corresponding laterally adjacent recess 528.